

cont. 1st

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Memorandum of Conversation

18352

721

SECRET

DATE: June 20, 1949

Bergstrom

SUBJECT: Interview with Professor Bergstrom

PARTICIPANTS: Professor Bergstrom
Joseph Yager, DDP-China Branch
Miss G. Blue, DDP-China Branch
[] CIA - Alien Section, Contact Branch, Office
of Operations (did not enter into interview
conversations but remained in the room during talk)

COPIES TO: ☒ CIA - ☐ [] Alien Section, Contact Branch,
Office of Operations.

S/P - Mr. John Davies
DRE - Mr. E. Spencer Barnes
DDP - Mr. Warren S. Runnberger

The interview was arranged as a continuation of Mr. Cyrus Peake's visit on May 20 for the purpose of further exploring Professor Bergstrom's special competence and specific knowledge on China and the immediately adjacent border areas. Miss Blue endeavored to establish a common ground of scholarly interest by asking Professor Bergstrom about his more recent knowledge of Russian and German academic friends known to both. It was revealed that some of the Russian Far Eastern experts whom Miss Blue had met at the Oriental Institute of the University of Leningrad in 1936 have been purged. Professor Bergstrom was in Outer Mongolia at the time, so that Miss Blue did not meet him then.

In the course of discussing the Oriental Institute of Leningrad, Professor Bergstrom disclosed that there was a special Communist Far Eastern training school across the river from the University of Leningrad. No mention was made of this special school in 1936 to Miss Blue, but it explained an unanswered query as to why there were no Chinese studying at the University.

Professor Bergstrom related how he and some of his colleagues had compiled a Mongol-Russian Dictionary in 2 years under the orders of the Communist educational officials. A factory type of system was set up whereby 300,000 slips containing Mongol phrases were processed and reduced to 60,000 slips from which the final dictionary was made.

Of special interest to China Branch was the information supplied by Professor Bergstrom that he had made a trip in 1929 from Semipalatinsk to Chugushak (Ta-cheng) in northwest Sinkiang eastward to Brumshi (Ti-han), Turfan, thence south to Kashgar, re-entering the USSR in Kirgiz S.S.R. and terminating the trip at Tashkent. The entire trip was apparently without any permission of Chinese

SECRET

FOR COORDINATION WITH *State*

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2003 2005

SECRET

- 2 -

18352

authorities or without any contact with them. It was thought that if Professor Bergstrom could recall with reasonable accuracy the manner in which this trip was undertaken and executed, what sectors of the U.S.S.R. government were concerned, such information might elucidate some of the current activities of the USSR.

Professor Bergstrom said that he had been in Ulan Bator in 1928, 1927, 1929, and for the last time in 1936. He had had some information from a Mongol friend in 1940 about the purge of a Mongol scholar who had been a friend of his.

When questioned about the possibility of using Russian publications for information about China and Outer Mongolia, Professor Bergstrom said that some of the materials done by the Czarist government and those done by the USSR were so classified that he had not been able to have any access to them except for daily work and that to rely solely on his memory of what he or others had read would not be satisfactory. He listed the following references as probably the most satisfactory for Outer Mongolia:

1. Trudy komissii po issledovaniyu Mongol'skoi Narodnoi Respubliki.
2. Materiali po issledovaniyu Mongol'skoi i Tuvin'skoi Narodnoi Respublik i Buriat Mongol'skoi Avtonomnoi Respubliki.
3. Vestnik Muncarii.
4. Sovetskay Stenografiya.

He thought that there was a possibility that the older issues of these publications could be located in the United States.

OIR/DEF:ACB:as:mv

SECRET